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A Life Supply of Roads

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“Two roads diverged in a yellow wood, and sorry I could not travel both”

- *Robert Frost, The Road Not Taken*

When I was in the eighth grade I spent hours repeating this poem to myself, burning every word deep into my brain until it was as constant and necessary as breathing. I did the same thing my sophomore year of high school, but this time I wasn't pressuring myself to memorize every word. This poem stuck with me throughout those years so much that reviewing it my sophomore year was like bursting through the small opening of a cracked doorway. Mumbling this poem has made me realize that I've had my two roads set before me multiple times in my life. Unlike Frost, I never wished to travel down both paths, but I've always wondered what the outcomes would've been.

I encountered my first two roads when I turned five years old. I was leaning against a doorway, nervously nibbling on the sleeve of my sweatshirt. In front of me was the principal of my school, and someone that I would later share an unbreakable bond with many years down the line. As they talked to me, my mind drifted off to an empty space. On my left was a shaded road that would have left me with nothing but regret and questions of what my life would have been like if I chose the other road. If I would have chosen to be shy and run out of that room, I would've been running away from many years of joy and laughter. On my right was a sunny road, lined with never-ending feelings of love and charitable childhood memories. Instead of running away, I chose to sit with this stranger and get to know her. This stranger ending up being a huge factor in my life. She took the role of my mother, who was partially absent due to unfortunate choices she chose to make. Looking back in my past, I know that my life would not be the way I currently live it if I chose the other road. This was the road I chose, and I'm happy I chose that path.

My second set of roads came in life when I was eleven years old. I was tightly gripping part of a harness, entwining my fingers until red marks appeared. I found myself face to face with my deepest fear, heights. My relationship with heights has always been complicated. When I would walk up staircases, I would

never look over the banister, fearing that one day my beautiful face would miraculously meet the platform below. When I'd go on hikes with my peers, them asking me to sit on the edge of the cliff for a cute pic was like asking me to grow wings and fly, it was impossible. I've always feared heights, but I've never faced it head on. My eyes grew bigger as I crept to the edge. I wanted to change my mind, I wanted to be a coward and ask the counselor to take off the harness because I no longer wanted to be brave. I held tight onto the harness, and screamed to the counselor,

"I've changed my mind. I'm too scared that I'll fall and die. I don't want to do this anymore."

He kept insisting to me that I was safely secured, and all I had to do was open my eyes and enjoy the ride. At that moment I had two roads, but only one could be taken. I could've chosen to back up from the platform and begged for the harness to be taken off. I could've taken that walk of shame past all my friends who have encouraged me to face my fear. I could've laid in my bed that night wondering what it would be like to soar through the air while the sky was a light-yellow color with highlights of orange. I could've chosen the shaded road, but I didn't.

I loosened my grip on the harness, and inhaled air until I couldn't anymore. I looked at the counselor one last time, foolishly believing that he was the last person I'd ever see after plummeting to my death. After taking my last glance I let my bottom end be supported by the strap of the harness and before I could change my mind, I was already off the platform. The wind began to brush through my braids, making them fly out as I soared across the sky. My eyes were tightly shut before I decided to see the view. I opened one eye first in case I was not fond with the view. Before I knew it, both eyes were open wide looking up at the beautiful sky. The sky was so beautiful and the wind felt so fresh and cool. I looked down on the field and saw my dark shadow coming to a stop. The ride that I dreaded to go on was over, but part of me wished it lasted longer. Soaring through the sky made me feel like a free spirit, just enjoying the feeling of air kissing my face. After getting off the ride I realized that I had made the right decision, I have faced my fear. This experience gave me a feeling of accomplishment and bravery. I now knew that I could face my fear and gain an experience while doing so. I took my newfound bravery and used it many more times in my life. At the age of 14, I climbed to the top of Mount Davis, and viewed Ohio from the tower. At the age of 17, I went on almost every roller coaster at

Dorney Park, including the biggest ride. I now am not afraid to face my fears due to the choice I chose to make.

Throughout my life, I have always tried to follow the right road. As easy as people make it sound, making the right choice is not always black and white. There are no instructions or guides in the world on how to make choices that will guarantee you nothing but blessings. No one is ever sure what path they're going to choose in life, whether it is the right one that can benefit them in the long run, or the wrong one that will just hold them back from opportunities or experiencing something new. Life is not predictable, and you can never be sure what road you should follow. I've made decisions in my life that I have wished had a better outcome, but those decisions have taught me a lesson I will never forget. All that is important is that the big decisions I have made such as attending college will benefit me in the future. As Frost said at the end of his poem,

"I took the road less traveled by, and that has made all the difference."